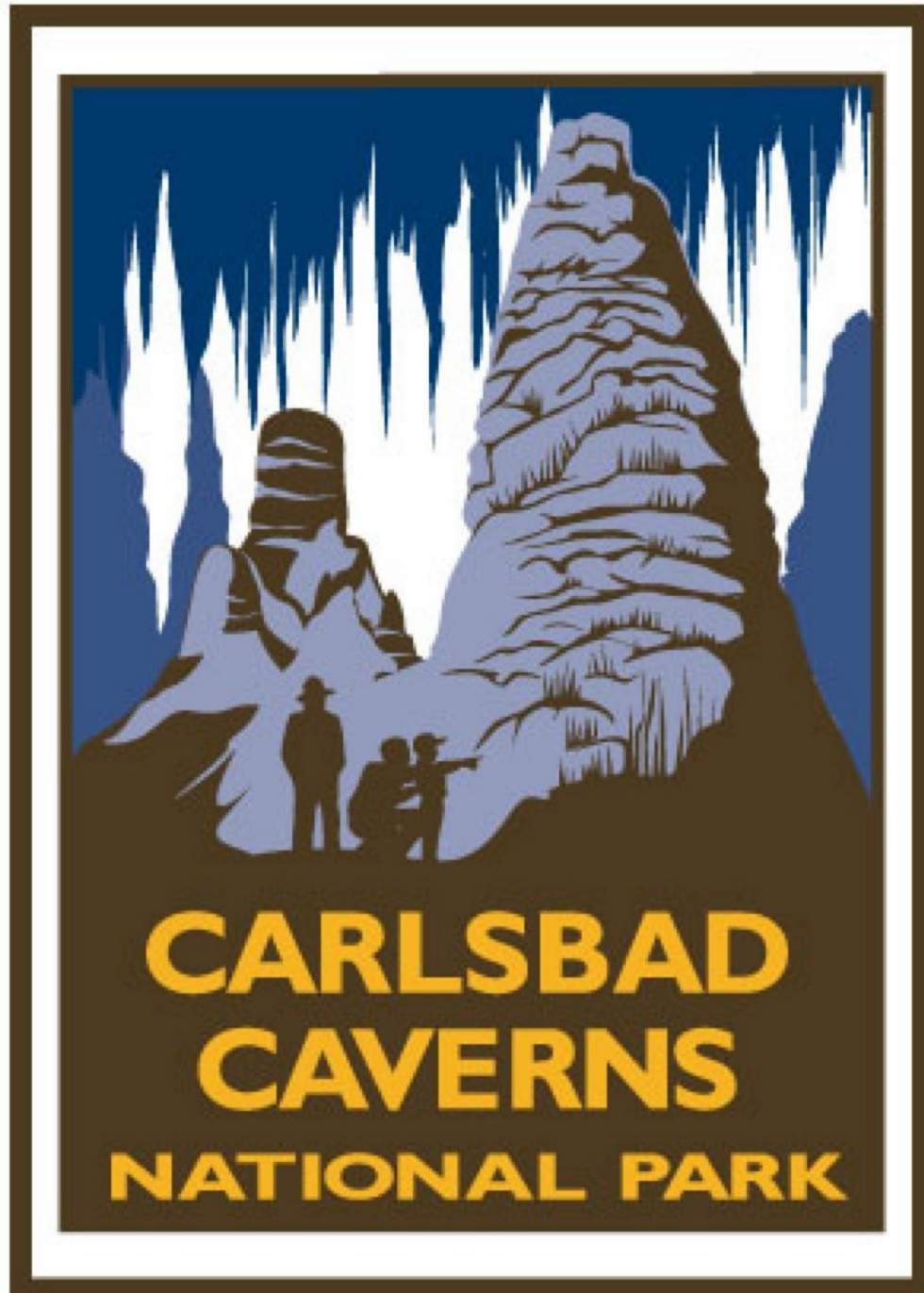


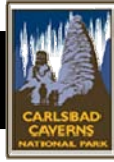
About Bats, Caves, & Deserts

A curriculum and activity guide for Carlsbad Caverns National Park



Elementary School





Section 1 – Field Trip Basics

Field Trip Essentials for Teachers

- If you are applying for a waiver of cave entrance fees, mail your **fee waiver application** at least one month in advance of your group's visit. The park needs 15 working days after receipt of your application to thoroughly review and respond to your application.
- Prepare your students through curriculum-based, **pre-visit activities**.
- Stress **park rules** with your students and chaperons prior to the field trip. Teach your students the reasons for each rule.
- Make sure all adults and students in your group participate in the park's **group orientation**. A park ranger will ask your students to recall park rules and the reasons for them. Students will also be asked to share what they learned in the course of their pre-visit studies.

Important Field Trip Notices

- A fee waiver may be revoked and a bill of collection sent to your school, if your group behaves inappropriately. A bill of collection may also be sent if the group's activities indicated that the primary purpose of the field trip was recreational, rather than educational, in nature.
- A fee waiver applies **only** to the self-guided Natural Entrance Route and the self-guided Big Room Route. Park rangers are not available to conduct tours of the Cavern's self-guided areas.
- An optional audio guide is available for a rental fee of \$3.00 per person.
- Tours, times and fees are subject to change, without notice.
- Field trip dates should coincide with classroom studies. Most schools schedule field trips for April and May. Fall and winter field trips are often more conducive to learning, as the cave is less crowded and park rangers have more opportunities to conduct special educational programs.
- Ranger-led educational programs must be scheduled well in advance.

Group Rules and Safety Matters

- Students must **stay with adult sponsors** at all times. We recommend **1** adult for every **6** students; but will allow a 1:10 ratio. Each adult is responsible for a specific group of students and must maintain control. On trails (cave or surface), one sponsor must lead the group and another must be at the end. Other adults should scatter among the students.

- Only **50** group members will be permitted into the Cavern at the same time. Larger groups may divide into groups of 50 and enter the cave in 15-minute intervals, or groups may start at the same time through different entrances.
- **Remain on hard-surface cavern trail** because the cavern floor is very delicate and can be hazardous.
- **Talk quietly** to allow yourself and others to enjoy the cave's natural silence.
- Cave pools are not wishing wells. **Do not throw anything in the pools.** Foreign materials introduce new bacteria. The native bacteria may not be able to compete with the foreign bacteria, and thus, may be eliminated.
- **Tobacco use of any kind is not permitted** anywhere in the caves.
- **Gum, food and drinks are not allowed** on the cavern trail system. The odor from gum and food can attract animals not normally found in the cave. Once they are in the cave, they often cannot find their way out. The underground rest area is the only place where food is permitted.
- **Do not touch cave formations, walls or ceilings.** Oils and dirt from hands can permanently damage and stain the caves.
- **Do not collect anything natural to the park.**
- **In case of injury or illness, notify a ranger immediately.** Phones are located along the cavern trail.
- This is a desert! Everyone should **carry a bottle of water** on surface hikes.
- Please let your students know in advance that elevators are used to return visitors to the surface. If a walkout is necessary, notify a ranger.

Fee Waiver Application Process

As a unit of the National Park System, Carlsbad Caverns National Park complies with the Code of Federal Regulations (Title 32, Part 2, Section 71.13) and NPS Guideline #22. Under these regulations and guidelines, your group may qualify for a waiver of cave entrance fees.

Although there is no entrance fee for children 15 and under, the fee waiver provides free access to the cave for the adult sponsors (at a minimum ONE adult is REQUIRED for every TEN students). Only organized tours or outings conducted for educational or scientific objectives are eligible. Please remember that the National Park Service allows a maximum of 300 students per day into the cave. To apply, please send the following:

1. A letter on your school's letterhead stating the purpose of your visit, name and phone number of sponsoring teacher, the number of students, number of adult sponsors, date of visit, and approximate time of arrival.
2. A copy of your lesson plans to verify the relationship between your studied curriculum and the park's resources.
3. Return a signed copy of the Group Visitation Rules to ensure that the rules have been discussed with all group participants prior to the visit.

If the park questions whether or not your group is from a bona fide educational institution, you will be asked to provide documentation of your official recognition as a bona fide educational institution, such as a copy of the school's Educational Tax Exemption Certificate.

Mail your fee waiver request at least three weeks in advance of your group's visit to allow the park sufficient time to thoroughly review and respond to the application.

Send your request to:

Carlsbad Caverns National Park
Attention: Fee Collection Supervisor
3225 National Parks Highway
Carlsbad, NM 88220
FAX 505.785.2302

If you do not receive a response, call 505.785.3137, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (Mountain Time).

If your application is approved, a copy will be mailed to you. Bring the copy with you when you visit the park and present it to the ranger at the information desk.

A fee waiver may be revoked and a bill for collection sent to your school if your group behaves inappropriately. Go over the cave rules with the students several times before you visit the park.

A bill for collection may also be sent if the group's activities indicated that the primary purpose of the field trip was recreational, rather than educational, in nature.

A fee waiver applies only to the self-guided Natural Entrance Route and the self-guided Big Room Route. Park rangers are not available to conduct tours of the cave's self-guided areas. An optional audio guide is available for \$3.00 per person.

Hours of Operation – The park is closed on December 25.

School Year Hours (Mid-September through Mid-May)

8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M. Visitor Center

8:30 A.M. Ticket Lines Open

8:30 A.M. - 2:00 P.M. Hours of Entry for Natural Entrance Route

8:30 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. Hours of Elevator Entry for Big Room Route

Hours During Summer Season

The visitor center closes at 7:00 P.M.

The last entry by the Natural Entrance Route is at 3:30 P.M.

The last entry by elevator for the Big Room Route is at 5:00 P.M.

Cave Tours

Self-Guided Tours – Least Restrictive

***Natural Entrance**

- 790-foot descent into the depths of the cavern
- **daily from 8:30 A.M. until 2:00 P.M.** (longer hours in summer)
- one-mile trail

- **one-hour** walking time
- may continue to the Big Room or may return by elevator
- steep and narrow switchback trail
- not accessible to people using wheelchairs
- not recommended for those with health or walking problems
- appropriate for all academic levels (adult supervision required)
- baby strollers not permitted for safety reasons
- **FEE WAIVER information: 505.785.3137**
- fees without waiver: \$6.00 (ages 16 and up). Free for ages 6 through 15

***Big Room**

- massive 8.2-acre chamber
- **daily** from **8:30 A.M. until 3:30 P.M.** (longer hours in summer)
- one-mile trail
- **1½-hours** walking time
- may enter by elevator or the natural entrance route
- well-graded and mostly level trails
- partially accessible to people using wheelchairs with assistance
- appropriate for all grade levels (adult supervision required)
- baby strollers not permitted for safety reasons
- **FEE WAIVER information: 505.785.3137**
- Without waiver: \$6.00 (ages 16 and up). Free for ages 6 through 15

*One general admission ticket or fee waiver covers both self-guided tours. A general admission ticket is good for three days. A fee waiver is good for only the date(s) stated in the letter.

Guided Tours – Restrictive

****King's Palace**

- highly decorated chamber 830 feet below the surface
- **daily** at various times. (additional tours during summer)
- **\$ 8.00** (ages 16 and up), **\$ 4.00** (ages 4 though 15)
- 1½-hour tour
- meets at underground rest area
- **75-person limit** (These spaces are also available to the general public.)
- not accessible to persons using wheelchairs
- no children under the age of 4
- reservations: call **1.800.967.CAVE (2283)**

Slaughter Canyon Cave

- **undeveloped** backcountry cave (no electricity, no paved trail)

- 30 to 45-minute hike uphill from the Slaughter Canyon Cave parking area to the cave entrance
- **Saturday and Sunday year-round AND daily during season** (Memorial Day through Labor Day) tours are available to the **general public**. For reservations, call **1-800-967-CAVE**. Fees are **\$15** for ages 16 and up and **\$7.50** for ages 6-15.
- Times vary, tours begin at cave entrance
- **2½-hour tour** plus hiking time to and from cave entrance
- **25-person** limit
- no children under the age of 6
- flashlight with two, or more, fresh D-cell batteries and drinking water for each participant.
- Hwy 62/180 to County Road 418 (5 miles south of White City) and follow signs (45-minute drive from Carlsbad, 35-minute drive from the visitor center).

Guided Tours – Highly Restrictive

****Left Hand-Tunnel**

- easy, one-half mile lantern tour (lanterns provided)
- highlights cavern history, formation, cave pools and Permian Age fossils
- offered **daily** at **9:00 A.M.**
- 2-hour tour
- **15-person limit** (adults and students) – no exceptions
- **no one under the age of 6**
- **\$7** (ages 16 and up), **\$3.50** (ages 6 through 15)

****Lower Cave**

- evidence of early exploration, cave pools and beautiful formations
- moderately-strenuous, 50-foot descent on ladder
- gloves are four AA batteries needed for participant (helmets supplied)
- **Monday – Friday** at **1:00 P.M.**
- 3-hour tour
- **12-person limit** (adults and students) – no exceptions
- **no one under the age of 12**
- **\$20** (ages 16 and up), **\$10** (ages 12 through 15)

****Hall of the White Giant**

- challenging tour to a remote chamber in Carlsbad Cavern
- strenuous, must crawl long distances, squeeze through tight crevices and climb slippery formations
- gloves, knee pads and 4 new AA batteries for each participant, helmets supplied by park
- **Saturdays** only at **1:00 P.M.**

- 4-hour tour
- **8-person limit** (adults and students) – no exceptions
- **no one under the age of 12**
- **\$20** (ages 16 and up), **\$10** (ages 12 through 15)

Spider Cave

- cave located off Walnut Canyon Desert Drive, has many bizarre formations
- strenuous caving tour, tight crawl ways and canyon-like passages
- departs from the visitor center and includes a ½-mile hike to cave entrance
- gloves, knee pads, 4 new AA batteries and drinking water for each participant
- helmets supplied by park
- **Sundays only at 1:00 P.M.**
- 4-hour tour
- **8-person limit** (adults and students) – no exceptions
- **no one under the age of 12**
- **\$20** (ages 16 and up), **\$10** (ages 12 through 15)

**Also requires general admission ticket or fee waiver for the self-guided tours.

Who to Contact

Call the Park Operators at 505.785.3137, if you wish to:

- ask questions of a general nature.
- bring your school group for self-guided tours only.
- check the status on your request for a fee waiver.

Call the reservation number at 1.800.967.CAVE (2283), if you wish to:

- schedule tours for which students must pay a fee such as Left Hand Tunnel, Lower Cave, Hall of the White Giant, Spider Cave and King's Palace.

Call the Education Office, at 505.785.3127, if you wish to:

- schedule a ranger-led program in the classroom.
- make reservations for the Chihuahuan Desert Lab (high school students).
- share comments, suggestions or complaints about an educational program.